IN THE CLAIMS

1-13.   (Canceled.)

14.   (previously amended) A method of automatically inspecting a surface treatment on a
game ball, which comprises the steps of:
    providing an automated processing station comprising a surface treatment
application apparatus, an automated inspection system, and a curing apparatus;
        applying the surface treatment to the game ball within the processing station;
        passing the game ball through the automated inspection system within the
            processing station; and
        determining conformance of the surface treatment to a predetermined
            standard;
        curing said surface treatment upon determining conformance of the surface
            treatment to the predetermined standard.

15.   (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of determining
conformance further comprises the step of:
        generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the surface treatment
            conforms to the predetermined standard.

16.   (previously amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of determining
conformance further comprises the step of:
        using the analysis signal to perform a further operation on the game ball.

17.   (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the step using the analysis signal further
comprises the step of:
        transferring the game ball for further processing or rejecting the game ball
            depending on the analysis signal generated.

18.   (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of determining
conformance further comprises the step of:
        using at least one analysis algorithm to determine whether extraneous marks
            are present on the game ball, wherein the extraneous marks comprise

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missing characters, ink smudges, ink smears, shadowing, missing sections of print, partial character thickness deviation, complete character thickness deviation, or misaligned characters; and

using the analysis algorithm to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.

19.   (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of applying a surface treatment on a game ball comprises the step of:

applying an agent to the surface of a game ball, wherein the agent is able to be illuminated under non-ambient lighting conditions.

20.   (previously amended) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of passing the game ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:

illuminating the game ball;

detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and

comparing the illuminated agent to the predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.

21.   (previously amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of illuminating the game ball further comprises the steps of:

providing a light source having a wavelength of about 300 nanometers to about 400 nanometers;

directing the light source at the game ball.

22.   (previously amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the step of providing a light source further comprises:

providing an environmental modification device to eliminate dimple effects, wherein the dimple effects comprise glare, shading, or image distortion.

23.   (previously amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined standard comprises a reference image of an acceptable surface treatment.

24.   (previously amended) A method of automatically inspecting a coating on a game ball, which comprises the steps of:

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providing an automated processing station comprising a coating application apparatus and an automated inspection system;

passing the game ball through an the automated inspection system within the processing station; and

determining conformance of the coating to a predetermined standard.

25.   (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:

generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the coating conforms to predetermined standards.

26.   (previously amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:

using the analysis signal to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.

27.   (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of applying a coating on a game ball comprises the step of:

mixing an agent with the coating, wherein the agent is able to be illuminated under non-ambient lighting conditions.

28.   (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of passing the game ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:

illuminating the game ball;

detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and

comparing the illuminated agent to a predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.

29.   (previously amended) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of illuminating the game ball further comprises the steps of:

providing a light source having a wavelength of about 300 nanometers to about 400 nanometers; and

directing the light source at the game ball.

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30.   (previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the predetermined standard
comprises a reference image of an acceptable coating.

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